

Safety Alert

Number: 15-24 Revised

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Subject: *Multiple Injuries and Asset Damage during FRC launch*

What Happened?

Upon request from the charterer our vessel proceeded to assist in an in-field emergency response situation. While the vessel was underway, the Master requested the Chief Officer to get the FRC prepared; the C/O delegated this task to the 2/O.

As the vessel was getting close to its destination, the boat launch team and FRC crew deliberately decided to begin lowering the FRC to the water; the vessel was still under way (speed app. 4.8 kts) and there were no Deck officers on-site.

Due to a combination of insufficient skills, poor preparation and lack of communication, when the FRC touched the water, it was violently pulled away from the vessel and turned broadside, before flipping over and capsizing; this resulted in the crew members being thrown into the water and the FRC being critically damaged.

Why Did it Happen?

Poor communication: There was no radio communication between Bridge and FRC team

Ineffective Drills: FRC personnel were unsure of their duties and only part of the crew had attended some previous drills. In addition, the crew had never exercised launching the FRC whilst the vessel was underway - the Master would always stop the ship to launch the FRC during exercises.

Incorrect Muster Lists: The muster list displayed on the Bridge was not followed and Muster lists in cabins had discrepancies in relation to the official vessel's muster list.

Certification of crew to operate FRC: some of the crew had been placed in FRC roles, despite not having sufficient certification or training to undertake these.

Stop Work not exercised: Despite the above 4 concerns - of which many FRC crew members were aware - no-one attempted to Stop Work during the FRC launch.

Obsolete and inappropriate "Plans and Procedures for Recovery of Persons from Water": carriage of a ship specific "Plans and Procedures for Recovery of Persons from Water" is a mandatory requirement, yet this vessels copy had not been completed (blank pages and Risk Assessments not included) and had not been verified on-shore.

Corrective Actions Taken / Recommendations?

Summary of Actions Taken

The following actions are underway and further requirements will arise from the final investigation report;

- Marine Superintendents and Vessel Managements to ensure ship-specific "Plans and Procedures for recovery of persons from water" are completed and up-to-date, approved by Operations Manager, and discussed with all crew on board;
- Muster Lists and associated roles to reflect trained personnel, and new drills/exercises conducted according to updates;
- Meeting on-board to highlight the importance of effective communication during emergency response, completion of valuable and effective drills and exercises, and use of sufficiently-trained personnel in emergency response roles

Key Lessons Learnt

Emergency Responses are coordinated by the Master and actions should only be taken under his command;

- Leadership commitment is key to ensure all emergency response roles and procedures are adhered to;
- Drills are to be taken seriously and conducted effectively - nobody knows when the crew will need to respond to an emergency, or what situations will be faced;

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Lifesaving Rules

The following Lifesaving Rules in green were in effect; the ones in red were not and contributed to the event.

					
Always use the Stop Work Policy to prevent unsafe acts or conditions	No alcohol or drugs while working or driving	Do not walk under a suspended load	Do not smoke outside designated smoking areas	Verify isolation before work begins & use the specified protective equipment	Prevent dropped objects
					
Protect yourself against a fall when working at height	Conduct gas tests when required	Wear a personal flotation device when required	Work with a valid work permit when required	Obtain authorisation before entering a confined space	Obtain authorisation before overriding or disabling safety critical equipment

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